Fleetwood

A CHARGE

Delivered to the

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE of ELY

AT

Cambridge,

Aug. the VII^th^. MDCCXVI.

AT HIS

PRIMARY VISITATION,

BY

WILLIAM L^d^. B^p^. of *ELY*.

Cambridge Printed: *Dublin* Reprinted and Sold by *S. Powell*, at the Sign of the *Printing-Press* in *Copper-Alley*; and by *G. Risk*, Bookseller, at the *London* in *Dames-street*, Price 2d. Where are also Sold, Copies of Verses to the Princess, with the Tragedy of *Cato*, and to Sir *Godfrey Kneller* on drawing King *George*'s Picture, Price 2d. Mr. *Row*'s Ode to the King on *New-Year's-Day*, 1716. Price 2d. *Burnet*'s Essay on Government, with the Arch Bishop of *Canterbury*'s and Bishop of *Gloucester*'s Sermons, *Jan.* 30. 1716. Price 1s. 5d. *Trivia*, by Mr. *Gay*, Price 6d. Mr. *Tickell*'s Translation of *Homer*'s *Iliad*, Book I. with *Musæus*'s Poem on *Hero* and *Leander* Price 6d. *Pope*'s Court Poems, Price 3d. 1716.

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WHEN, by God's Providence, through the KING's Favour, I was, (without any ſingle Step of mine, direct or indirect) Tranſlated to this *See*, and intended, according to Cuſtom, to make my *Primary Viſitation*, the firſt Year; I could not but think it very fortunate for me, that, ſince we had loſt the QUEEN, and with Her, all the Hopes that had been laid up in that precious Life, I could Congratulate the Clergy of this Dioceſe, with the Succeſſion of *the Houſe of* HANOVER, which promiſed, according to humane Reckonings, almoſt a perpetuity of *Proteſtant Princes*, to govern, patronize, protect and favour *the Church of England*. A Proſpect, that no Clergymen now living, ever had before! for tho' the Children of K. CHARLES the Firſt were many, and five of them lived to ſee the happy *Reſtoration* of their Family, and of our Antient Government both in Church and State, yet two of them were taken away, within the Year, of whoſe Religion we were moſt and beſt aſſured. The D. of GLOUCESTER died unmarried; and the Princeſs of ORANGE, but the Mother of one weakly tender Child, who then was little heeded in the World, tho' ſince, he lived to be our KING; and if the Nations round about may be allowed to judge, one of the greateſt Princes that we ever had. Of the three Surviving Ones, the Princeſs HENRIETTA was bred up by her Mother, and Married into *France*, ſo that the Succeſſion on that Side, was what no *Church of England man* could think upon, with any Comfort. As to the KING himſelf, he was quickly after Married, to a Princeſs of great

Virtue, and many excellent Endowments, but of a wrong Religion for our good, and from whom the Nation in a little time had too much cauſe to think there would come no Children, This, by the generality of People then living was accounted a great misfortune to this Nation; and ſo it had certainly been, had that fine Prince, with his many excellent engaging Qualities, been but *ſincerely Ours*: but they who knew him well, knew he was not; and he himſelf, when all his worldly Views and Intereſts were at an end, confeſs'd he was not. Which juſtified what many Men boldly affirmed, becauſe they knew it ſo, before; what many more did certainly believe, but were more cautious in affirming; becauſe of Temporal Inconveniences; and what many thouſands more, did vehemently ſuſpect, namely, that from the time he came among us, his Heart was never truly with us; altho' the Date of His and Our Misfortune in that Point, muſt be put a little higher. So that the hopes of all the Nation, with Reſpect to the Succeſſion, centred in the D. of YORK; of whom I need to ſay nothing, and of whom indeed I can ſay nothing better, than that he was the Father of two ſuch Daughters, both *our Queens*, as did him Honour that will live for ever. Of theſe two Princeſſes, the One both lived and died Childleſs; the Other died ſo, tho' ſhe was the Mother of many Children, and of *one* who was of great Hopes, and of ſome Continuance with us.

This was the ſhort and broken Proſpect of Succeſſion, that the Nation had for many Years: a Proſpect that afforded little ſolid Satisfaction, to ſuch as truly loved their Country, and wiſhed well to their Religion, and could look before them. But this was all that could be had, till it pleaſed God, for the better Security of both, to put it into the Hearts both of the *King* and *Parliament*, to Settle the Succeſſion on the firſt Proteſtant Branch of the ſame Royal Family of the STUARTS; which has now taken place, in the Perſon of our preſent KING, who ſtands in the ſame Degree to K. JAMES the I. with *the late* QUEEN, the One by a Son, the Other by a Daughter; the Popiſh Branches being all cut off.

off, by the ſame competent Authority, as utterly inconſiſtent with the Welfare of this Nation.

This was the Happineſs, upon which I purpoſed to Congratulate thoſe, over whom I was ſet by the Divine Permiſſion, at my firſt coming to them. And indeed, upon the QUEEN's Demiſe, I thought it was the greateſt in the World that could befall us all, and that nothing elſe could make that loſs ſit tolerably eaſy, on a Church-man's Mind. For, what Condition ſhould we have been in, had it been otherwiſe?

As matters now ſtand, and have long ſtood, the Secular Intereſts of the Church, are ſo involv'd and interwoven with thoſe of the State, that, as I think it would be hard to ſeparate them, without the hurting of them both (as all the Experiments that hath been made that way, have ſhewn) ſo I dare ſay the One can never flouriſh ſingly, without the Other. And therefore, whatever the warm Heads and gay Hearts, may conceive, imagine, wiſh, and talk, the ſober and conſiderate Ones will always find it to the Churches Advantage, to be as cloſely united to the State, in all its Publick Intereſts, as it can poſſibly be, ſaving its Loyalty to Chriſt the Lord its Head in Heaven, in matters merely Spiritual. I did therefore think, and ſtill do, that the Proſpect of a Succeſſion of *Proteſtant Princes* of ſuch Continuance and Extent, as it has pleaſed God to ſet within our View, as it was of the greateſt Importance to the State, ſo it would be one of the welcomeſt Subjects, a Biſhop could ſpeak on, to a Body of Proteſtant Clergy, who would, I thought, be ſooner ſenſible than other People, of ſo great a Bleſſing. There is nothing more eſtabliſhes the Hearts of all ſorts of People, of every Rank and Quality, of every Order and Degree amongſt Men, than a good View of what is like to follow: Nothing that ſets them more at eaſe and quiet, than to think they ſhall themſelves enjoy, and leave to their Poſterity, the ſame good Government both in Church and State, the ſame good Laws, the ſame great Liberties and Privileges, envied by all the Subjects in the World beſides. And of all theſe Bleſſings there cannot be a better, hardly any other, Security, and Pledge, than

a fruitful Royal Line, of the ſame Intereſts and Religion with our Selves. To all theſe things, I thought, at that Time, to have ſpaken at large: but being hindred from coming among you, ſomething by my Attendance on the *Parliament*, but more by my Infirmities, and bad Health, I had not the Opportunity of doing it; and think it ſeaſonable, at this time, but juſt to mention it in the manner I have done.

Upon this diſappointment, I was put to bethink my ſelf again, on what Subject I might Speak moſt uſefully to you, for as to all other ways of Speaking, I would not uſe them if I could. And here, the little Acquaintance I had with the Temper and Diſpoſition of the People in general, and with the Learning, Manners, and Qualifications of thoſe who make up the proper Audience, upon theſe Occaſions, would not permit Me, to ſpeak as home, and pertinently, as I might do upon a fuller Knowledge of the Dioceſe. It was therefore left to me, to ſpeak in generals only, and from the Excellence and *Dignity*, as well as *Difficulties* of *the Paſtoral Office*, to frame an Exhortation, both to my Self and every One of You, to ſuch a Careful and Conſcientious Diſcharge, each of us, of our ſeveral parts, as may anſwer the Ends of our holy Inſtitution, and ſatisfy the Obligations we have laid upon our ſelves, when firſt we undertook our Offices; ſuch, in a word, ſuch a Diſcharge, as will ſupport and comfort us in the laſt Day, when the great Lord and Maſter of us all, ſhall call us, every One of us, to an Account, each of his Stewardſhip.

Of the *Dignity* and Excellence of our moſt holy Calling, the Scriptures have ſpoken ſo much, ſo plainly, ſo fully, and expreſsly, that there is little need of amaſſing the Paſſages together, and repeating them, to ſuch an Aſſembly as this. And, as for all the Attempts of the Profane, the Scornful, the Witty, and malicious Spirits of the Age, to vilify and bring it into Diſrepute, they are no other than what have always been, and always to be expected. Our Care muſt only be, that We Our Selves contribute nothing to it, by our Imprudence, our Negligence, our Ignorance, or Ill Behaviour of

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Selves. Religion is ſo uſefull, and ſo neceſſary to the well-being of the World, and ſo perfective of humane Nature, that it commands the Eſteem of all Men, and obtains it of all that are Reaſonable. There never was a Country, in any manner civilized, without Religion; Nor have any of our Travellers, in their Diſcoveries either of the Old or New World, found any Populous Town, or City, without a Temple, or Place of Publick Worſhip. Nor was there ever any Religion profeſs'd, without its Prieſts and Miniſters; nor Prieſts and Miniſters without their Honours, Priviledges, and Revenues: Nor, I may alſo add, were ever any Prieſts and Miniſters without their Enviers, Maligners, and Traducers; who yet were never able to perſuade the World, out of their Religion, or the Neceſſity of Perſons ſet apart for the Adminiſtration of its Offices. It is by no means New, or of yeſterdays growth, that Men employed in Sacred Offices, ſhould be inſulted, injured, rail'd upon, and evil ſpoked of; Complaints of that kind are as old as any accounts we have, and that, in all Places, and under all Religions. But the Men of One Age ſuffer for themſelves, and conſequently are more ſenſible of the Evil, than they can be of what they read, as done in former Times; one or two Injuries that a Man himſelf feels, make deeper impreſſion, than Twenty Relations of the like, ſuffered by Others; and his Complaints will be a great deal louder; but his Complaints will not be heard forty years hence, if he be dead; or if they ſhould be read in Books, they will not be attended to, as leſs Complaints will be of One who ſuffers *then*. And ſo it is with thoſe which we ſee with our Eyes, they affect us much more than thoſe which we hear with our Ears, tho' credibly reported, and believed. *Say not thou, what is the Cauſe, that the former Days were better than theſe, for thou doſt not inquire wiſely concerning this*, ſaith Solomon, *Eccl.* VII. 10. Complaints and Accuſations of this kind, are older, we ſee, than any Books we have; the People of his Days were inclined to magnify the former Times, at the Expence, and to the Diminution of their own: the Reaſon is, we are not ſo well acquainted with

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the former Times, as with out own : Hiſtory is one thing, and Experience is another ; and things at Diſtance ſhew much leſs, than thoſe which are at hand, And indeed, it can not well be otherwiſe, than that the Effects ſhould be near the ſame in all Times, when the ſame Cauſes are in being and in force. The Paſſions of Men are, generally, the ſame at all times ; the Provocations that Men give to Injuries are much the ſame ; and the Handles and Occaſions that Men take hold of, differ not much, at different Times : And ſince theſe are, generally, the Sources of Mens Sufferings and Complaints, no marvel if the Streams run very near alike, at all times. And after all, it may be, all theſe conſtant Railings at, Injuries, Inſults, and Attempts to vilify the Miniſtry, may make one ſort of Proof, of the Excellence and Uſefulneſs of our holy Calling ; for were it not of great Importance, it would not be ſo much taken notice of ; if it were not very troubleſome to wicked People, it would not be ſo maligned by them. It is the conſtant Check and Controul, that is laid upon Men of unſound Principles, and immoral Practices, by the good Learning, Virtue, Zeal, and Vigilance, of God's more immediate Servants, that is the true Subſtantial Cauſe, at the bottom of much of that ill-will, with which they are purſued, and of the evil uſage they find at their Neighbours hands; which is to their Commendation here, and will be to the Increaſe of their Reward hereafter.

Theſe things I have been the rather led to ſay, that, if the modern Complaints of this kind, ſhould, moſt of them, be true ; and Report, herein alone, no Liar ; if Invention had no hand in framing them, nor Malice in improving them, nor any Artifice were uſed in ſpreading, feeding and fomenting them, they would not yet be any harder Reflexion on the *Age*, or *Prince*, or *Government* under which they happen, than Complaints of the like kind were heretofore, in other Times, in other Princes Reigns, and other Governments. 'Tis what is natural, 'tis what is uſual, and common to all Ages ; it has happened in all *Kings Reigns*, in which the Oldeſt of us lived ; our Fathers made the ſame Complaints ; and if we

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read ſtill backward, we ſhall find the ſame thing: Nor is there any Remedy for this Miſchief, that is effectual: a total Stop to Peoples Petulance and Malice, is what was never yet found out, nor ever will be. It is not quite the ſame thing in *Popiſh* Countries, but it is not much better. As they have naturally and unavoidably, more profane and impious Scoffers at Religon than we have, as having much more Provocation to deride the reigning Superſtition of their Countries, with ſo many ſolemn Fooleries; ſo they do often fly out, and break through all the Reſtraints of Decency, and Cuſtom, Law, and Puniſhment, and treat the Clergy with opprobrious Language and Contempt. And even in Countries where they have a Hell on Earth to torment Offenders againſt themſelves in, as well as one to threaten Men hereafter with, which is not dreaded half ſo much —— even in thoſe Places, where the *Inquiſition* rages, the Tongues of Men will not be totally reſtrained, but they will utter their Reproaches, and their Scandals, tho' with more Caution, Ambiguity, and a more guarded Malice: Which I mention only to ſhew, that no Severity, no Power, no Laws, can ever totally ſuppreſs theſe cruel and outrageous Licences. And therefore that we are by no means, to think our Caſe ſingular, however hardly and injuriouſly, we may be treated by a perverſe Generation. We may ſay, I hope, as St. *Paul* ſaid, of himſelf, and all true Iſraelites (making all due allowances) *We, Brethren, as Iſaac was, are the Children of Promiſe: But as then, he that was born after the Fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now*: And I doubt I may alſo add (tho' it is not Scripture) *So it will always be.*

But after all, I think we cannot help both ſeeing and acknowledging, that God hath put it very much into all our hands, both to conciliate and preſerve, in a great meaſure, that Love, Reſpect, Eſteem, and Honour, which is ſo due to the Excellence, and Dignity of our holy Calling, by putting it into our power, to execute our Office carefully and conſcientiouſly, with as much

Prudence and Diſcretion as we can. And indeed, unleſs we do our utmoſt Diligence, to fulfill the ſeveral parts of our Miniſtry, in the moſt ſerious, uſefull, and moſt edifying manner we are able, we ſhall not convince the World, that we our Selves do either underſtand ſufficiently the Importance of our Office, or have it in that Honour and Eſteem we ought to have, and are deſirous they ſhould have it in. As bad as the World is, Religion has not quite loſt its Power, nor its Miniſters their Awe and Influence upon Peoples Minds, if proper Applications be but made, in proper Time, and Place, and other ſeaſonable Circumſtances. As bad as the World is, it has certainly Something to ſay in its Defence ſtill, which were it exactly true, abundance of Complaints would be better ſpared, than made with any noiſe. If Men accuſe us of neglecting to diſcharge our Duties; or of ill Management and Indiſcretion in diſcharging them; if they accuſe us of notorious Inſufficiency, reproachful Ignorance, and Unskilfulneſs in matters properly relating to our Calling; but, above all, if they can charge us with immoral Practices, in giving them a bad Example, we never are to look for that Reſpect, Eſteem and Honour, which are only due to Virtuous, Learned, and Diſcreet Clergy-men. Let us look for what we will, the World will ſtill have more Regard to our Perſonal Qualifications, than to the Dignity of our Calling; they will not reverence us for what we ſhould be, but for what they ſee, and find in us. 'Tis ſo in all other Caſes, let the Profeſſions of *Law* and *Phyſick* be never ſo Honourable, becauſe ſo uſefull and ſo neceſſary, to the preſervation of our Health, Eſtates, and Property, yet who knows how to value and eſteem a Practitioner in either of thoſe Faculties, if he want either Skill or Honeſty? if he either does not Underſtand our Caſe, or does not uſe his Underſtanding to our Benefit and Relief? nor would it alter the Matter much, if God himſelf had poſitively inſtituted thoſe Profeſſions; for no Authority, Command, or Power, can create an Eſteem or Love, in Peoples Minds, of either Things or Perſons, unleſs they find or believe, that there is ſomething eſtimable or lovely in them.

them. The outward marks of Honour and Reſpect, may be paid, by virtue of Command, and muſt be if commanded, and are, moreover, uſefull to ſome purpoſes. But if we would be inwardly eſteemed, we muſt endeavour to deſerve it, and lay the foundation of it, in our Selves, in the Uſe and Exerciſe of thoſe good Qualities, Abilities, and Powers, that God hath given us, for the Service and Edification both of our ſelves and thoſe who are committed to our Care.

It will not be at all to our Advantage, to tell the People, tho' from Scripture, with any Air of Exaltation or Authority, that we are Chriſt's immediate Servants, Stewards of his Houſhold, Diſpenſers of his Word and Sacraments, his Meſſengers, his Watchmen, and the Shepherds of his Flock, nay more, a Royal Prieſthood, his Embaſſadors, and Angels: unleſs we can alſo ſay, unleſs the People alſo ſee and know, that we have, in ſome good meaſure, fulfill'd the parts belonging to thoſe Officers, to whom thoſe great Titles do indeed belong. Our Office is then only rightly *magnified*, when it is well diſcharged: and we only wear thoſe Honours creditably, when we have gain'd them by our faithful Service in this Warfare. This is the Uſe we are to put theſe figurative Titles to, which are ſo frequent in the Scriptures; they are to put us ſtill in mind, of being what we undertook to be, when we were dedicated to God's Service; juſt as the name of *Saints* was to remind the Chriſtians in St. *Paul*'s time, of what they ought to be, and what they had, in Baptiſm, engaged to be. And this is the Uſe, which our wiſe and well-compoſed *Office*, of *Ordering Prieſts* calls and requires us, to make of them. When it has done exhorting us, *to have in our Remembrance, into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office we are called*, i. e. *to be Meſſengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord, to teach, and to premoniſh, to feed and provide for the Lord's Family*, with other great things, it makes this Uſe and Application of them—*Have always therefore printed in your Remembrance, how great a Treaſure is commited to your Charge—for they are the Sheep of Chriſt, which he bought with his*

Death, and for whom he ſhed his Blood. The Church and Congregation whom you muſt ſerve, is his Spouſe, and his Body; and if it ſhall happen the ſame Church, or any Member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance, by reaſon of your Negligence, you know the Greatneſs of the fault, and alſo the horrible Puniſhment that will enſue. Wherefore conſider with your Selves, the end of your Miniſtry towards the Children of God, towards the Spouſe and Body of Chriſt, and ſee that you never ceaſe your Labour, your Care, and Diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden Duty, to bring all ſuch as are, or ſhall be committed to your Charge, unto that Agreement in the Faith, and Knowledge of God, and to that Ripeneſs and Perfectneſs of Age in Chriſt, that there be no place left amongſt you, either for Error in Religion, or for Viciouſneſs in Life.

You ſee where all our Honours, and Titles, and great Names, end; and wherein does eſpecially conſiſt the Excellence and Dignity of our Office: it is, in being Good our Selves, and doing all the Good we can to Others, whilſt we live in this World: to be continually endeavouring to ſave our Selves, and thoſe who hear us. 'Tis, in behaving our Selves ſuitable to the Names that are given us; and anſwering to the Parts that are aſſign'd to us, in the great Work of Man's Salvation: 'Tis doing, with Relation to Chriſt, and to his Family, juſt as we think our *Stewards* and Diſpenſers of our Goods, ſhould do with relation to *us* and our Houſhold, if we were qualified to keep ſuch Servants: We would expect they ſhould be found faithful, and careful in their Buſineſs. We look that Our *Meſſengers* ſhould go, as they are ſent, and do their Errands readily, directly, and exactly, as we bid them. Our *Watchmen* muſt be wakeful, have all their Senſes quick about them, look too and fro, warn us againſt our Danger, and alarm us when the Enemy is near: Our *Shepherds*, we expect, ſhould know their Flocks, keep them together all they can, ſearch for the wandring Ones, and drive them gently to their Folds again, and be exceeding Careful of them all, to preſerve

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them against all Beasts of Prey, and all infectious Distempers. The very Name of an *Embassadour* puts noble Thoughts into our hearts, and fills us with great Images; but tells us plainly, that He must be always careful, neither to say nor do, what may reflect Dishonour on his *Master* and great *Principal*.

Thus these Titles serve to instruct us in our Duty, and excite us to it. And when they operate thus effectually upon our Minds, they *make* us what we are *called*, and give us a Right to our honourable Names here, as they will, through God's great Mercies in our Lord, give us a glorious Crown of Recompence hereafter. And I need not say again, that without our Care to deserve them, and make our Claim good to them, they will not be barely Vain and Light Titles, but they will go along with us to Judgment, accuse, reproach, and condemn us, and weigh us down into a greater Depth of Misery.

Having spoken thus much to the *Dignity* and Excellence of our High Calling, and to the ways by which they will be best preserved and kept up, I shall be allowed (as indeed there will be less Occasion) to speak the less, to the *Difficulties*, that attend it. *The Form of Ordination* joins them closely, and makes the same Use of the Consideration of the Latter, as of the Former, and nothing truly can be better than that Use of it. *Forasmuch then* (says that good Form) *as our Office is both of so great Excellency, and of so great Difficulty, you see with how great Care and Study you ought to apply your Selves, as well that you may shew your Selves Dutyful and Thankful to that Lord, who hath placed you in so high a Dignity; as also to beware, that neither you your Selves offend, nor be Occasion that others offend.* The Difficulties that attend our Calling, may be considered either with regard to the Qualifications that are requisite to the making a good Clergyman; Or, to the Pains and Care he must be at, to the well-discharging his Duty; Or to the Trouble, Opposition, and Ill-Will, that may arise, and he may meet with, in and from his well-discharging it.

As to the Qualifications that are requisite to make a

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Compleat Clergyman, if we ſhould conſult the Writings of ſome very famous Chriſtian Biſhops, and others, of old, and be obliged to believe them, without departing from them in the leaſt, we ſhould find them ſo great, ſo many, and ſo hard to be obtained, that as I am ſure for my own part, ſo I may reaſonably fear, that many of this Aſſembly, deſpairing of ſuch Attainments, muſt have betaken our Selves to other Callings, who yet, I hope, ſhall give a good Account to God, each of our Stewardſhip. I have often wondred with my ſelf, that Men who were as wiſe and learned, as they were Religious, ſhould write in ſo diſcouraging a manner; Should repreſent it ſo exceeding difficult, for a Man to be qualified for holy Orders, that not one modeſt humble Chriſtian of five hundred, would preſume to Offer himſelf to that Service; nor many more, if Others muſt alſo judge of them, according to thoſe rigid Rules. Theſe Men were great Orators in their Way; but it is not only a falſe Eloquence, but a Miſchievous one, that treating about General Duties, raiſes them ſo high, that they become impracticable: ſo that what God commands us all to do, and by commanding, ſhews we all can do, theſe Rhetoricians would perſuade us, few or none can do; and inſtead of animating our Hopes, gives us deſpair, immediately.

According to the Flights and Exaggerations of theſe devout and over-fervid Spirits, a very few People, were they ſerious, would ever go into Holy Orders, which ſhould it ever happen would be very prejudicial to Religion; tho' over-ſtocking the Church is alſo not without its Miſchief. There was ſomething like this happened, in the matter of the Bleſſed Sacrament, which may partly account for it. For the two or three firſt Centuries the generality of Chriſtians did frequently, even every Lord's Day, partake of the Lord's Supper; but this their frequency, did naturally abate much of their Devotion, in the performance of that holy Service, which godly zealous Men perceiving, ſet themſelves to write and preach upon that Subject; and, to raiſe the Peoples devout Affections, and revive their antient Fe-

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ours, ſaid ſo many fine exalted things, uſed ſo many ſtrong and bold Alluſions, and lively figurative Repreſentations, both of the *Prieſt*, and *Sacrifice*, and *Preſence*, that they quickly made the Duty of Preparation ſo difficult, and the Danger of coming to that Table ſo great and dreadful, that even good People were afraid to venture, and rather choſe to ſtay away, altho' invited to that Supper, than come without what was then made to be the Wedding Garment. Thus, good well-meaning Men, do often cure One miſchief by Another, and ill they have tried, they know not which is greater. Not unlike to this—— In the Days of Perſecution, and when the Clergy were firſt ſought after, and in greateſt Danger, as they always were, we may very well preſume, that they were not abundantly more in number, than might ſerve the Neceſſities of the Church; the Wiſdom of its Governors would find it neceſſary to reſtrain all forwardneſs that way, and to hazard no more than they needs muſt. But when the *Emperors* became Chriſtians, and thought they could never be magnificent and bountiful enough, in building and endowing Churches, and in favouring Church-men; and when the great Men of the World thought they could make no better Court to their great *Maſters*, than by following their Examples: perſuaded alſo of the Excellence of their new Religion, and that whatever they beſtowed upon the Servants of Chriſt, was very acceptable to him, and would be rewarded by Him: When this was the Condition of the Church, and growing daily better, when it became not only ſafe, but honourable, and advantageous too, to be a Clergyman; we need not doubt but Men betook themſelves to this Profeſſion in great Numbers; as well thoſe who came with a good Conſcience, and moſt ſincere Intentions of ſerving God in the Miniſtry, let the Times be what they would; as thoſe who were invited to it by the Tranquility and Peace the Church enjoyed; as alſo thoſe who had their Eyes upon the Profits and Preferments which they hoped to find. And if, among them, there were many Ignorant, Careleſs, and Neglectful Ones, many Ambitious, Covetous,

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and very worldly-minded Men —as we need not much wonder, ſo we may well imagine, that the Scandal which theſe People gave, and the great Fears, that things would ſtill grow worſe and worſe, if not prevented by ſome means, might move the Men of nobler Principles, of better Learning, higher Stations, greater Sanctity, and more auſtere Behaviour, to Preach and Write about theſe matters, in ſuch a way, as would, they thought, ſooneſt repreſs that forwardneſs of entring into Holy Orders, which was likely to turn to no good account. And this they would moſt naturally do, by overſtraining every part of Duty, and running every thing to ſuch a Height, that few could think of reaching it. They would multiply Qualifications, and magnify each particular; whatever was great and good, would immediately become *neceſſary*; and nothing below Perfection be admitted. The Treaſure which was heretofore in St. *Paul*'s time had in *Earthen Veſſels*, muſt now be put into nothing but Gold and Silver —— This is, after all, but my Conjecture, grounded on ſome hints left us, in Hiſtory because I would fain find out ſome Excuſe, for thoſe Exceſſes which appear in theſe great Mens Diſcourſes upon the *Prieſthood* and the *Paſtoral Office*; which were they to be litterally and ſtrictly underſtood, would frighten all, but very wicked unpious Ones, from undertaking any part of it. And I doubt I might ſay of the Biſhops and Prieſts of any one Age, what old *Theognis* with ſome pleaſantry ſaid of the perfectly good Men, in his ——

He thought a Wherry-boat would hold them all.

But 'tis very well for us, that theſe great Mens *Examples*, relieve us, againſt the Rigour of their *Rules* and *Inſtructions*; for after all they have ſaid, they were themſelves *Biſhops* and *Preſbyters*, and tho' very Learned and very Good, yet not ſo ſuperlatively ſo, but that others might and did equal them. Some of them fled indeed from *Ordination*, as they would from Miſchief, and *hid themſelves* as from an Enemy: but they were found at laſt, and overtaken, and caught, and ordained and made, by a Religious ſort of Violence, to undergo thoſe Offices, and diſcharged them paſſing well, from

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which they had deterr'd both themſelves and others, by the Repreſentations and Deſcriptions they had made, of their inſuperable Difficulties. So that if any One be ſcrupulous and frightened at what St. *Chryſoſtome*, St. *Ambroſe*, or St. *Gregory*, or others have *ſaid* upon this Article, they may take heart again, at what they *did* and practiſed. I do not mean this, or ſay it, to the diminution of their Credit and Authority, in general: But I would have no Body ſo much Looſers by their Reverence of Antiquity, as not to reaſon themſelves, and conſider things in their own Nature, and with their Accidental Circumſtances, and judge, as thoſe did who went before them.

The Paſtoral Office was at firſt, as it muſt needs be, in the hands of a few, and thoſe ſanctified and ſet apart to the work of the Miniſtry, by the Holy Ghoſt, and qualified in an extraordinary and wonderful manner to diſcharge it: but this was not to be the Conſtant method of chooſing and appointing Succeſſors. The Governors of the Church were not long under the immediate Influence and Direction of the Bleſſed Spirit, to know them, who were fitly qualified for the Offices that were to be ſupplied: but they were left to the guidance of their Reaſon, and Prudence, Obſervation and Experience; and choſe, juſt as the wiſe Men of the World would chuſe, to fill up places of Importance, with Men as well qualified and proper for the purpoſe, as they could get. If they found good Senſe and Underſtanding, there was no great Inquiry after Learning, becauſe there was then no great need of it, for they had generally but one Tongue, and that their Mother-tongue. The *Latines* indeed look'd upon *Greek* much as we do upon *French*, the better ſort learn'd it for Pleaſure and Accompliſhment; but this, like other parts of good breeding, ſpread not far. It does not appear that the *Greeks* had that regard to *Latin*, even when the Emperors reſided in the *Weſt*, and were moſtly at *Rome*. So that they were only put to learn to talk and read gracefully their Native Language. In this, the Antient Clergy both of the Eaſt and Weſt, had a great Advantage over us,

and all who followed them, who ſpend a great part o
our ſhort Lives, in getting a little Latin and Greek, an
are thought to have no Learning, till we have Languages
I can not chooſe but think this to be a great Difficulty
and an Impediment in the purſuit of other uſeful Know
ledge; but yet it is not to be remedied; nor would i
be for our Good to remove it, if we could; becauſe
throughout the Chriſtian World, where it is moſt remo
ved, there is the greateſt Ignorance and Barbariſm, an
the Chriſtian Doctrine moſt corrupted: as appears ver
much in *France*, more in *Italy*, and moſt of all in *Spain*.
And in our own Country, we all of us feel, of how grea
Service it is, to be accounted Learned by our People, an
that where the Fame is otherwiſe, our Credit is but littl
with them. But to return to what I was about — A
Chriſtianity prevailed in the World, and the number o
the faithful Flock increaſed, the number of the Chriſtia
Paſtors muſt increaſe proportionably alſo; and he wh
reckons that a *great Number* may as well be qualified, a
a *ſmall Number* may be, may think he reckons with Re
ſon, but will ſurely find he reckons wrong, upon Exp
rience. Now if ten thouſand People be abſolutely n
ceſſary to the well-diſcharging a great Office, would
be Wiſdom to require ſuch Qualifications in each Com
petitor, as ſcarce a hundred of that Number could h
neſtly pretend to bring along with them? Nor is it a
more to the Credit or Service of the Church, to preſcri
abundance of ſtrict preliminary Rules, when, if it wou
be ſerv'd at all, it muſt admit of as many Relaxation
Or to make a world of things neceſſary, in *Profeſſio*
when it muſt be content with the good Obſervance of
few, when we come to *Practice and Application*.

In this, the Wiſdom, Prudence, and Moderation of t
Church of England, as all other things, appears Conſ
cious: She does not preſcribe ſuch Qualifications, as
can only wiſh and pray, might be the Portion of all
Prieſts and Miniſters, but ſuch as ſhe may reaſonab
hope they *may*, and expect they *ſhould*, bring along wi
them: ſuch as with the Ordinary Aſſiſtance of God
Grace, and their own Diligence, and Care, and Pains a

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Study, they may be furniſhed withal. An honeſt and an upright Heart, above all things; full of ſincere and ſerious Reſolutions, of ſerving God in the beſt manner we can, in our holy Calling, by edifying the People committed to our Care, both by our Teaching and our Living. This, with a Competency of Learning at the firſt, Hope of Proficiency, and Promiſe of endeavouring to increaſe in all the Parts of uſeful Knowledge, as we have Opportunity, the Church accounts ſufficient, and accepts upon theſe Terms, her Candidates for holy Orders. The Difficulties therefore of our Calling, as they imply the Qualifications, that are previouſly required of thoſe who are to enter on it, are not ſo great as to diſcourage Men of honeſt Minds, ſerious Diſpoſitions, well-tempered Zeal, and moderate Abilities, from undertaking it.

As to the Difficulties that relate to the Care and Pains, Men muſt be at, to the well-diſcharging the Duties of their Calling; or to the Trouble, Oppoſition and Ill-will, that may ariſe, and they may meet with, in and from their well-diſcharging it, they are not ſo great in themſelves, as to frighten a Man of Virtue and Reſolution; tho' accidentally they may be, and ſometimes are exceedingly great and many, partly through the Folly, Malice, and Perverſeneſs of Others, and partly from our own want of Patience, Temper, and Diſcretion in our Management. But be they great or ſmall, few or many — I have not left my ſelf time enough to ſpeak to them now, becauſe I have one or two things more to leave with you, before I end, which can not ſtay for another Time, as the others may, ſhould it pleaſe God to continue us, to it.

The firſt is, *a Paper of Reſolutions*, agreed upon at *London*, which, being to be communicated by me to the Clergy of this Dioceſe, I have cauſed to be printed, and diſtributed among you; in hopes you will read it carefully, and conſider it, not as a Paper of Courſe only, but indeed of great Moment, and Concern to the well-being of the Church. The buſineſs of *Teſtimonials* is what gives us great Trouble; the Jealouſies we have about them keep us conſtantly uneaſy: And therefore ſince

we muſt ſee and hear, very much, with other People's Eyes and Ears, and judge by other Peoples Judgment we have great Cauſe to require, that all due care be ta ken, in giving them, before they come to us; for afte wards, it is not often in our Power to examine and di prove them, nor, with Reſpect to the *Canons*, wholly t reject them. But I remit you to the Paper it ſelf.

The Other thing that I would ſay to you, before w part, is, to deſire you, at your Return home, to tak your Time, and Opportunity, to inſtruct your Peopl in their Duty and Allegiance to their KING, and tho who are put in Authority under him. They may t told, that it falls not to their ſhare to determine o Princes Titles, or diſpute their Rights: They are muc better provided for; 'tis more to their Advantage, a their Safety, that they are only *to obey*, where the S pream and Legiſlative Power bids them *obey*. They ma be told, that the Obedience of the Subject is not to Perſonal only, Humourſome, or Partial, according their Fancies and Affections — much to *this* Prince, mo to *that*, and little to *another*; but Conſtant, Uniform the Like, and evermore the Same, to all Princes, com manding only what is Lawful.

It will unavoidably happen, that one Prince ſhould leſs beloved, and inwardly eſteemed than another, ſom times with Juſtice and Reaſon enough, ſometimes wi Little, often none at all, but purely from Fancy, idle St ries, groundleſs Surmiſes, rais'd and fed, by Artific cunning People; but all muſt be alike *Obeyed* and *H noured*, for that is for the Good and Safety of the who

It is neither wiſe nor convenient, to compare the L ving with the Dead; for, Sorrow and Loſs make us fond and partial to the One, as Joy and Intereſt make to the Other; and Truth is ſomewhat overlook'd both. But as far as a Private Man can judge of Prin Hearts and Inclinations, their Diſpoſitions, Qualites, a Powers, I venture to ſay it my ſelf, (tho' I would n require it of you, to ſay) that I think we have hard ever had a Prince upon the Throne, that came better clined, or better qualified to make us a happy Peop

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than he who now Reigns over us. His Interest and Politick Views must needs dispose him to the same; but they who knew him well, expect it rather from his great Goodness, excellent Nature, Sense and Love of Justice, tempered with much Benignity and Mercy, Strength of Mind, Firmness of Resolution, great Prudence, and Experience in the Arts of Governing. But this, you may acquaint your People with, because 'tis known to all abroad, that, before he came to us, there was not a Prince in *Europe*, better esteemed by all his Neighbours, nor better beloved by all his Subjects than he was, which, of all the Indications of a Good Prince, is the surest and the most to be depended on. They loved him there, altho' his Power was bounded by nothing but his Will, because they saw his Will was ever guided by his Reason, and that Reason was the Publick Good. They loved him there the more, the longer they had felt the Benefits of his good Government. They loved him there so well, as to grieve at his Accession to a Crown, because they were to lose his Presence by it, and feel the Influence of his Wisdom, and Goodness, at a greater Distance. They love him still, however, removed as he is, and distant from them, and meditate no Change, not only from the Sense of their Oaths and Obligations, but because they know no Change can better their Condition. Nor do they take the Occasion of his Absence, to traduce his *Ministers* whom he employs; but trust intirely to his Judgment in their Choice, assured, that he who means them nothing but Good, and makes their Good his own, will take all Care both to procure it, and continue it to them, by most fit and proper Instruments.

One is a great deal ashamed, to think that a Prince of so much Merit, and of so unblemished a Character, throughout the World, should want to be commended to the People of *England*; as if we were less sensible, less discerning, and less careful of our Interests and Happiness, than others are. And I am not a little conscious to my self, that such a Part as this, is not, without a great Necessity, a proper Task for a *Bishop* at his *Visitation*: But great Necessity makes things improper to become

become Neceſſary. And is there not an evil lying Spirit gone forth amongſt us, ranging to and fro, in every Shape, and filling every Corner of the Country, with Defamation, Scandal, and Detraction; inventing things impoſſible, ſurmiſing things improbable, uttering down right Falſhoods, miſrepreſenting Truths, mingling them ſpitefully, detracting from all Advantages, magnifying all the leaſt Miſcarriages or Misfortunes, and giving every thing a wrong Turn, and all to alienate the Hearts and Affections of the People, from the King's Perſons, Family, and Government? And as the way of old was for the Lying Spirit to go forth, and deceive, by the mouth of *the falſe Prophets*; ſo, where that has not happened now, but where the People, notwithſtanding, are deceived, whence can the Truth proceed with more advantage, than from the *faithful honeſt Prophets* mouth, to meet with, ſilence, and repreſs, theſe evil Speakings, Lies, and odious Slanders?

And ſince, It is preſumed, I ſpeak to none, but ſuch as have already given the KING all the Security the Laws require, by ſundry, and by frequently repeated Oaths, I know that what I ask cannot appear unreaſonable. It is but what thoſe Oaths do naturally require; for, as our Prayers to God for any thing we want, ſuppoſe our beſt Endeavours going with them, to obtain it, ſo muſt our Oaths be evermore accompanied by ſuch a Meaſure and Degree of *Activity* to the fulfilling them, as is ſuitable and proper to the Office, Place, and Station, we bear in the Common-wealth; which is, undoubtedly, to ſet the People right, in their miſtaken Notions; remove their Prejucices; and clear them of thoſe Ill-impreſſions, which falſe and wicked Men have, without, and againſt all Reaſon, moſt maliciouſly made upon their Minds. 'Tis what our true Intereſt, as we are an *Eſtabliſh'd Church* calls for, as much as our Duty; our Enemies fear nothing more than our exerting our ſelves, and our Friends expect nothing leſs at our hands. Our very *ſilence* where theſe Scandals are ſo loud, will not be look'd on, as the Effect of peaceable and quiet Diſpoſitions only, even by ſuch as are moſt favourable to us, but as Coldneſs and

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Indifference: but by ſuch as are leſs friendly to our Order, it will be look'd on as Connivance and Good-will, reſtrain'd by Fear and Doubt of the Event: but by our Enemies, it will be conſtrued, as it naturally looks, like nothing leſs than Favour and Encouragement. And, in truth, I ſeriouſly believe, that neither our Enemies abroad, nor thoſe we have at home, have grounded their paſt Hopes, or do ground their preſent or future Ones, of Succeeding in their Attempts, on any one thing in the World *more*, than upon what they have partly ſeen themſelves, and ſtill ſee, and on the Repreſentations that are made to them by Others (with great Enlargements we may well preſume) of the Silence, Heartleſs Inactivity, Coldneſs, Indifference, and the Languid Zeal, of thoſe Eccleſiaſticks who are truly, in the Intereſt of the Government on the one ſide; and on the other ſide, upon the Numbers, Strength and Influence of ſuch as they believe are hearty Well-Wiſhers, Favourers and Advancers of that Cauſe, as far as is conſiſtent with their Safety from the Laws. And ſhould theſe People reckon right, there would be ground enough for much of their Confidence: for every one has had Experience enough of late, to ſhew him, how conſiderable the Power of ſuch a Body of Men is; and of how great Uſe and Service it is, when rightly and well exerted, and again, how formidable when ill directed. But it is in the Power of every one of us, to convince theſe People, that they reckon wrong, and are deceived, *at leaſt in One*. 'Tis much to their Advantage to have the Calumny believed, and ſpread: 'tis juſt as much to ours, to ſhew it is a Calumny, and that they are miſtaken; by letting our People know (as there is need) that they muſt be, as we our Selves are, good *Engliſhmen*, good *Proteſtants*, and *faithful Subjects* to the KING, according to the Laws of God, and of the Land, and the moſt ſolemn Obligation of their Oaths. And in this Hope, I will take my leave of you for this Time, beſeeching God to bleſs us, every one of us, in the Diſcharge of our good Office; that when we have gone thro' this troubleſome unthankful World, we may give an Account to him, both of our Selves, and all com-

committed to our Care, with Joy, and not with Grief, and may receive that *Euge*, at our Master's Hands, which is a thousand thousand Times above all Earthly Honours and Preferments, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

FINIS.

P. S.

Good Brother,

BEfore these Sheets were quite finished at the Press, *I received a Letter, from* the Deputies of the Episcopal-Reformed Churches *in* Great Poland, *and* Polish Prussia, *and of* the Episcopal Bethlenian College *in* Transylvania; *wherein they earnestly intreat me, after the Example of* His Grace *My Ld. ABp. of* Canterbury, *and My Ld of* London, *to recommend the most deplorable Estate those Churches and that College are now in, to the charitable Consideration of the Reverend Clergy of* My Diocese. *The Request was so reasonable, and the Example so good, that I complied with it, and followed it immediately; and gladly took the Opportunity of conveying my Desires to you, on their Behalf, together with* my Charge, *assoon as it could be.*

The KING, *of his great Goodness, hath been moved to grant a general* Brief, *for the Relief of these distressed People, which will give you a full Account of their unspeakable Sufferings past and present, and what farther Miseries they are like to undergo, unless Supported by Us. This* Brief *will come amongst you, about a Month hence: But I hope and desire you will, in some of the Interim, use your Endeavours to dispose your People, to a more than Ordinary Liberality in contributing to the Necessities of these our Christian Brethren, of the same Houshold of Faith with us. And I intreat you to take care, to make as good Dispatch in this Collection, as you well can, because these Necessities are so very strong and pressing on the poor Sufferers.*

I am, Good Brother,

Your affectionate Friend,

Ely Aug. the 30th. 1716. and humble Servant in our Common Lord.

W. ELY.

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